

Resolution 049

A Resolution to Support Students in Times of Personal Crises

Sponsored By: Senator Birth

**Co-Sponsored By: Senator Besendorfer, Senator Farrell, Senator Holcomb,
Senator Michels, Senator Suarez**

Whereas,

Some students will undergo unforeseen challenges throughout the academic year that pose a barrier to their education.

Whereas,

These challenges may pertain to, but are not limited to, matters of physical health, mental health, sexual assault, family deaths, and other emergencies.

Whereas,

In these situations the burden falls on the students to coordinate with the Dean of Students Office, Center of Academic and Career Success (CACS) advisors, academic advisors, the Provost's office, and other potential advocates within the university system, during a time of personal crisis.

Whereas,

Some students feel they are not given the proper support needed, despite correspondence with administrators.

Whereas,

Students are urged to thoroughly communicate with their professors during these times, but many students have expressed that they feel they are expected to divulge too much sensitive information, on multiple occasions, and wish for further assistance in advocating for themselves in such situations.

Whereas,

Many students have had instances where they feel as if professors are not being as accommodating as they should be regarding make-up assignments, tests, absences, and general leniency in respect to the course syllabus, and therefore unfairly reflected on their grades.

Whereas,

Classrooms are equipped with technology instituted in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and there are protocols for providing students with course materials during quarantine periods, thus making virtual education and catching up on lectures and assignments when absent easier than ever, but professors are often reluctant to use these resources in non-COVID situations.

Whereas,

Students are often unaware of the resources available to them when going through a crisis. Many students do not know that their situation is worth seeking help from the Dean of Students office, the Provost's office, or other offices. Similarly, many are unaware that advisors are a useful resource and advocate for students who want to seek academic accommodations, and advisors have been found to be able to better connect students to the Provost's office in the event that their services are needed.

Whereas,

Students in times of crises are often referred to the Counseling Center. While it is a valuable resource, obtaining services from the Counseling Center is not easy to accomplish on short notice during the academic year, and some students may benefit from counseling in specialty areas not provided by the Counseling Center.

Whereas,

Universities across the country are combatting similar issues by creating highly publicized Student of Concern Committees as a means to streamline action plans for students going through crisis situations, but Catholic University has opted for an individualized approach in which only the necessary offices are looped into a student's current situation, but this method is not publicized nor understood by the majority of the student body, leaving students unaware of how their situations could potentially be handled.

Whereas,

Conversations regarding protocol for student crisis situations will be commencing this summer, and the Office of the Provost welcomes the input of the Student Government Association on the matter.

Be it enacted that

The Student Government Association Senate, acting in its official capacity as the representative of the undergraduate student body of The Catholic University of America, hereby requests that the Catholic University of America take the following suggestions into consideration when conversations on student crisis protocol begins the summer going into the 2022-2023 academic year:

1. Students should be made frequently and well aware of capabilities and resources within the Dean of Students office, The Office of the Provost, as well as of the ability of CACS and academic advisors to be advocates for students when personal crises arise. New avenues for doing so should be explored, such as physical advertisement, social media campaigns, university wide emails, partnerships with student organizations, and events hosted by such offices. In addition to this, it should be publicized regarding how these offices interact with each other on behalf of students and the ability of students to utilize various offices during times of crisis.
2. Should students have advocates from any of these offices be involved to correspond with professors, students should be able to receive leniency which deviates from the course syllabus in making up tests, assignments, taking absences, and other academic accommodations within reason, such as using classroom technology, without disclosing significant details of their personal circumstances.
3. The University publishes through the Counseling Center or similar website, a comprehensive directory of local resources to receive counseling and other assistance during times of crisis, to aid students in being proactive in seeking outside help when necessary.

Agreed to by a vote of _____ yeas to _____ nays on this date: _____ with _____ abstaining and _____ not present.

Abby Anger
President of the Student Government Association

Monica Wallace
Vice President of the Student Government Association

